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AUTHOR Priselac, Nancy J.

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ABSTRACT

The Harrison County Teacher Center is a consortium involving seven institutions of higher learning, Harrison County Schools, and the State Department of West Virginia. The center is committed to relevant changes as the most important goal of teacher education programs. This report describes the program, setting, changes identified through workshop evaluation forms, the advisory committee, stated goals, accomplished objectives, methodology funding, and future plans. (MJM)

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HARRISON COUNTY TEACHER CENTER
Dr. Nancy J. Priselac, Coordinator
Report Submitted September, 1972

INTRODUCTION

The Harrison County Teacher Center is a consortium involving seven institutions of higher learning, Harrison County Schools and the State Department of West Virginia. The Center Coordinator, Dr. Nancy J. Priselac, assumed duties on September 1, 1971. The Center is committeed to relevant change as the most powerful goal related to present-day teacher educator programs. There is an increasing demand by the legislature, state agencies and the public at large, for valid research data with regard to newly designed systems which isolate and define existing and projected needs within a teacher education center. The Harrison County Teacher Center is in the process of developing new procedures for meeting these needs through objectives constantly modified and expanded during an action program involving student teachers, supervising teachers, principals, community and the consortium.

THE SETTING

Harrison County School District is a county system consisting of 30 elementary schools, 3 Jr. High Schools and 9 Sr. High Schools. Although this is basically a rural community, the personnel are progressively minded and very willing to implement relevant change within the classroom. The community is concerned with their children's education as evidenced by Patrons' clubs, band clubs and the County's P.T.A. which work closely with Harrison County Schools on problems of mutual concern. There are 680 classroom teachers in Harrison County. During the first semester, 1971-72, 79 student teachers from Fairmont, Salem, Alderson-Broaddus, WVU, Glenville and W.Va. Wesleyan were supervised by Harrison County Educators. One Hundred Forty were supervised second semester. At last count, 105 student teachers were placed first semester of 1972-73. Davis and Elkins did not supply student teachers during the first year.

CHANGE RECOGNIZED

Evolvement of change due to the impact of the Harrison County Teacher Center during the 1971-72 school term was identified through workshop evaluation forms by student teachers and by supervising teachers and principals. Furthermore, over 300 teachers in Harrison County requested student teachers for the year of operation (1972-73). Since Alderson-Broaddus supplies student teachers only the first semester and Davis and Elkins will not use the Harrison County Center until next year, the increase from 79 to 105 in number of student teachers for two sequential first semester placement, is evidence of a stronger commitment to the Center by the involved institutions.

SP 006 047

The number of classroom teachers requesting student teachers for second semester during 1971-72 almost doubled. Using this information as trend data, the Center expects to place approximately 200 student teachers second semester (1972-73). Since all supervising teachers are given a flat rate "token" honoraria of $50, monetary rewards are not assumed to have caused the sharp increase in requests for student teachers.

Alderson-Broaddus placed junior year laboratory assistants in secondary schools on a pilot basis last year and Salem College placed junior year laboratory assistants in elementary schools. Evaluation of the program led Salem College to design a new program for their Sophomore tutors which will be piloted first semester 72-73. All courses offered through the Center are on

CHANGE RECOGNIZED (continued)

contract basis. There are currently 21 college and county Administrators enrolled in Ed.Ad. 385, an on-site course offered through cooperation with West Virginia University. Also 10 classroom supervisors enrolled in C & I 582 offered on-site through cooperation with Marshall University.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Membership within the Advisory Committee is regulated by guidelines accepted by institutions of higher learning, Harrison County Public Schools and the State Department. Only one member from each institution may cast a vote, the State Department has one voting member and the county has eight voting representatives including central office supervisors, principals, and teachers. Students attend but have no voting power.

Two co-chairmen selected from and by Council membership with one representative (Wayland Burgess, Fairmont State) from the institutions of higher learning and one representative (Henry Mayer, Central Office) from the public school setting will chair the committee meetings on alternate monthly basis. Meeting site is to be selected one month in advance. The two co-chairmen and the Center coordinator will form the agenda committee. In areas of major policy change and/or budget, an extra month will be granted before a formal vote is called for with Council membership comprised of institution and county representatives who are qualified to act on the item under consideration by casting a legitimate vote. A request to delay vote for one month can be called for by any member of Council.

STATED GOALS

The Harrison County Coordinator is responsible for preservice placement and advising with regard to inservice sessions within Harrison County. Her duties are as follows:

a. Selects, organizes and repares supervising teachers.
b. Placement of student teachers.
c. Placement of other personnel which arise under the variables.
d. Attends all meetings of the council and sub-committees.
e. Prepare and organizes workshops.
   1. All workshops must be approved by the council.
f. To be the "go between" with public schools and institutions of higher learning.
g. Shall promote activities to be presented to the council for the betterment of teacher education which will create a higher level of supervising teacher and student teacher.
h. Informs council of available inservice workshops and courses, professional meetings and educational resources of the community.
i. Provides for evaluation of all center activities.
j. Establishes a vehicle for communication to reach all teacher educators within the Center framework.
k. Prepares written working papers as needed by the Center.

Goals as stated for the Harrison County Teacher Center:

1. Assist development of acceptable programs for preparing classroom teachers as strong candidates for entering the teaching profession.
2. To gain greater public school commitment to teacher preparation.
3. To improve cooperation between colleges and public schools and State Department in a joint search for quality and good teaching practice.
4. Expand inservice education to more personnel involved with the Center.
5. To develop a communication network to report inservice activities designed to promote growth in teacher education effectiveness on the part of all personnel involved with the teacher education function.
6. To assist in developing and implementing preservice field activities. Focus is on program change to enhance the preparation of professional education college students for productive and successful careers as teachers.

ACCOMPLISHED OBJECTIVES

The Harrison County Center concept is designed to coordinate a superior student-teaching experience and identify strong professional educators as supervising teachers, Unique opportunities for Harrison County Center student teachers have included:

1. A pre-student-teaching orientation session at the County Courthouse to introduce central staff to each group.
2. Publication of "RESPONSE", the Harrison County Teacher Center newsletter on a regular basis.
3. Media skills workshop held at County Courthouse.
4. Inter- and Intra-school observation of outstanding teachers. Some have been video taped and the tape has been shown to the public via Channel 5 in Clarksburg, West Virginia.
5. Assistance from the County's Language Arts specialists. They have worked as team members with college and county instructors to develop new programs.
6. Participation in the on-going evaluation of the Center Program.
7. Workshop which exposed each student teacher to benefits of Learning Resources Center for Region I.
8. Publication of original games developed by student teachers during workshop in the Harrison County Teacher Center newsletter, "RESPONSE".
9. Exposure to role playing as a teaching strategy on the concept of Responsibility for Salem College staff and student teachers.
10. Prelaboratory experience centers established in Harrison County for practical classroom exposure prior to the student teaching semester for (K-3) situations for Salem College and (7-12) for A.B. College.

Unique opportunities for Harrison County Center supervising teachers and Administrators have been included:

1. An orientation program conducted at West Virginia University, Salem College and Fairmont State to acquaint supervising teachers and principals with institution objectives and goals. The other institutions are preparing similar programs.
2. Media Skills Workshop held at Salem College Campus Life Center. Consultants, Dr. Stephen M. Priselac, Dennis Brestensky and T.R. Albertson, from Penn State University held three workshop sessions.

3. Individual and group conferences with Center coordinator on problems confronting supervising teachers at the current point in time.
4. Special workshop sessions held by six of the institutions of higher learning.
5. Participation in the pre-laboratory experience center program (K-3) and (7-12).
6. Two day inservice -- Lacy Hall - Chicago - Guest Consultant.
7. Participation in on-going evaluation of the Center program.
8. Published a brochure on the Harrison County Teacher Center.
9. Development of a slide program for use within specific classrooms.
10. Develop and facillitate a program for ATE National Clinic in Charleston.
11. Publication of comments with regard to Center activities.
12. Utilization of survey forms to apply for student teachers through the Center.
13. On-site "No Credit" pilot course at Gore Jr. High.
14. On-site Marshall University graduate C & I 582 course.

THE METHOD

Dr. Priselac believes a good communication system is vital to the survival of the Center. She, therefore, made arrangements with the public relations coordinator in Harrison County to release articles regarding the Harrison County Center and its activities on a regular basis. She further developed and distributed regular issues of a newsletter, "RESPONSE". "RESPONSE" publishes original ideas of the student teacher and supervising teacher, research data on workshops and inservice sessions and information with regard to the Harrison County Teacher Center. A personal visit was made to each of the 41 schools in Harrison County during the first two weeks of September such that each principal could identify the purpose of the Center. Dr. Priselac meets with the principals during the regular monthly meetings and supplies written documents and memos regarding the Harrison County Teacher Center. This group of educational leaders are helping to develop a stronger program for preparing classroom teachers to re-establish their vital role in directing the laboratory experience in teacher preparation. Without doubt, it is the classroom supervising teacher who has impact on the student teacher's performance. The Harrison County Center supports the position that the college supervisor should redirect his energies to provide services specifically identified to assist the supervising teacher while working with student teachers. It is, therefore, a responsibility of the Center coordinator to assist the institutions of higher learning in servicing the supervising teachers with skills necessary to work more effectively with student teachers.

FUNDING

Harrison County Teacher Center Consortia submitted a written proposal to the State Department in June, 1972, which was funded for $19,500 a portion of the $125,000 allocated by the legislature for the state-wide network of teacher centers in West Virginia. In addition, a $20 fee is paid to the Center for each student teacher placement from every institution of higher learning.

FUTURE PLANS

A blending of theory and practice is important. For such a professional role it would seem clear that teacher preparation must include both a substantial amount of pre-service and in-service education. It is a continuous process. Indeed, no person can be adequately prepared for such a role in only the pre-service program. He needs to work in a new program preparing him for a new role as part of, and along with, his experience on the job. We in teacher education must look to the future in terms of a unified whole and continuous learning.